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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
March 31, 2006  
PHD #06-11

Contact: Terri Williams, REHS  
Program Manager  
(909) 387-4692

Egg Safety for Easter Egg Hunts

With Easter just 2 weeks away, families are already planning their festivities that often include egg hunts. It is important to practice safe handling of eggs before, during and after the egg hunt.

Before the hunt...

- Wash your hands thoroughly for at least 20 seconds before handling eggs at every preparation step, including cooking, cooling, dyeing and hiding.
- Only use eggs that have been refrigerated and discard eggs that are cracked or dirty.
- When cooking, place a single layer of eggs in a saucepan. Add water to at least one inch above the eggs. Cover the pan, bring the water to a boil, and carefully remove the pan from the heat. Leave the eggs in the pan--18 minutes for extra large eggs, 15 minutes for large, 12 minutes for medium. Immediately run cold water over the eggs. When the eggs are cool enough to handle, pour off the water and place them in an uncovered container in the refrigerator where they can air-dry.

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- Color only uncracked eggs and use only food coloring or specially made food-grade egg dyes. Dissolve the coloring or dye in water that is warmer than the eggs; this lets the eggs expand and keeps them from pulling in dye solution through their pores. When handling eggs, be careful not to crack them. Otherwise, bacteria could enter the egg through the cracks in the shell and may cause a foodborne illness.

- Keep hard-cooked eggs refrigerated until just before the hunt. Keep them fully chilled by storing them on a shelf inside the refrigerator, not in the refrigerator door.

- Consider buying one set of eggs for decorating only and another set for eating.

### **During the hunt...**

- Hide the eggs in places that are protected from dirt, pets, and other potential sources of bacteria.

- To prevent bacterial growth, don't let eggs sit in hiding places for more than 2 hours.

### **After the hunt...**

- Discard any eggs that were cracked, dirty, or that children didn't find within 2 hours.

- Place the eggs back in the refrigerator until it's chow time!

If you have questions about other food handling problems, please contact San Bernardino County Environmental Health Services at (909) 884-4056 or visit the web site at [www.sbcounty.gov/dehs](http://www.sbcounty.gov/dehs).

MARK H. UFFER  
County Administrative Officer

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